

CLAIMS

1. A method for purchasing access to a media item over a network, said method
5 comprising:

(a) receiving, over the network, a buy request from a user requesting to buy a particular media item, the buy request being initiated by the user through a single graphical user interface action by the user once an identifier for the particular media item is displayed on a display screen for the user, and the buy request including an
10 account identifier for the user;

(b) initiating payment for the particular media item being purchased in response to the buy request being received, the payment being processed using information previously stored in a user account associated with the user;

(c) determining media access information pertaining to the particular media
15 item; and

(d) sending, over the network, the media access information to a user machine of the user, the media access information thereafter being used by the user machine to access the particular media item.

20 2. A method as recited in claim 1, wherein the payment of the particular media item is a fixed price per media item.

3. A method as recited in claim 1, wherein the media item is one of an audio song, a video, or an audiobook.

25 4. A method as recited in claim 1, wherein the media access information includes a URL to a remote storage server that stores the particular media item.

5. A method as recited in claim 4, wherein the media access information further
30 includes a security token and a download key.

6. A method as recited in claim 5, wherein said method further comprises:

(e) retrieving the particular media item from the remote storage server using the URL to locate the particular media item and using the security token to provide authentication.

7. A method as recited in claim 6, wherein said method permits said retrieving (e) to be repeated until the user machine confirms receipt of the particular media item.

8. A method as recited in claim 7, wherein the particular media item retrieved from the remote storage server is encrypted, and

wherein said method further comprises:

(f) decrypting the particular media item using the download key;

(g) re-encrypting the particular media item with a user key; and

(h) storing the particular media item to local storage following said re-encrypting (g).

9. A method as recited in claim 1, wherein said sending (d) is prevented from being performed when the payment of the particular item is flagged as having a problem.

10. A method as recited in claim 1, wherein the particular media item is an audio file and/or a video file.

11. A method as recited in claim 1, wherein the particular media item is a group of audio files.

12. A method as recited in claim 11, wherein the group of audio files pertains to a playlist or an album.

13. A method as recited in claim 1, wherein the buy request requests to buy a group of particular media items.

14. A computer readable medium including at least computer program code for purchasing access to a media item over a network, said computer readable medium comprising:

computer program code for receiving, over the network, a buy request from a user requesting to buy a particular media item, the buy request being initiated by the user, the buy request including an identifier for the particular media item and an account identifier for the user;

computer program code for initiating payment for the particular media item being purchased in response to the buy request being received, the payment being processed using information previously stored in a user account associated with the user;

computer program code for determining media access information pertaining to the particular media item; and

computer program code for sending, over the network, the media access information to a user machine of the user, the media access information thereafter being used by the user machine to access the particular media item.

15. A computer readable medium as recited in claim 14, wherein said computer readable medium further comprises:

computer program code for retrieving the particular media item from the remote storage server using the URL to locate the particular media item and using the security token to provide authentication.

16. A computer readable medium as recited in claim 15, wherein said computer program code for retrieving can be repeated until the user machine confirms receipt of the particular media item.

5 17. A computer readable medium as recited in claim 14, wherein the payment of the particular media item is a fixed price per media item.

18. A computer readable medium as recited in claim 14, wherein the media item is one of an audio song, a video, or an audiobook.

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19. A network-based media purchase system, said system comprising:

a plurality of client media player programs, each of said client media player programs being resident on a different client machine;

a media storage server that stores media items in an encrypted format; and

15 a media commerce server that enables each of said client media player programs to purchase media items by enabling the client media player programs to initiate payment for such, to download the media items that have been purchased, to decrypt the media items from their encrypted format, to re-encrypt and store the media items to the client machines, and to subsequently use the re-encrypted and
20 stored media items.

20. A network-based media purchase system as recited in claim 19, wherein said media commerce server further enables each of the client media player programs to purchase media items by enabling the client media player programs to receive
25 access information from said media commerce server, at least a first part of the media access information being used to decrypt the media items from their encrypted format.

21. A network-based media purchase system as recited in claim 20, wherein at least a second part of the media access information is used to locate the media items at said media storage server.

5 22. A network-based media purchase system as recited in claim 19, wherein each of the media player programs produce a graphical user interface on the corresponding client machine, the graphical user interface including at least a first window and a second window.

10 23. A network-based media purchase system as recited in claim 22, wherein the first window displays first information provided remotely by said media commerce server in a browser-like manner, and wherein the second window displays second information in an application-like manner, the second information being provided locally by the client media player program operating on the corresponding client
15 machine or being provided remotely by said media commerce server.

24. A network-based media purchase system as recited in claim 23, wherein the second window displays a list of available media items that are associated with at least one criteria.

20 25. A network-based media purchase system as recited in claim 24, wherein each item in the displayed list of media items has a buy button, and wherein selection of the buy button causes the selected media item to purchased.

25 26. A network-based media purchase system as recited in claim 24, wherein selection of one of the items in the displayed list of media items causes the graphical user interface to display an image associated with the selected media item.

27. A network-based media purchase system as recited in claim 26, wherein the selected media item is a song, and the image associated therewith is an album cover image for an album including the song.

5 28. A network-based media purchase system as recited in claim 24, wherein any of the available media items in the displayed list of media items can be previewed on request by a graphical user interface action.

29. A network-based media purchase system as recited in claim 19,
10 wherein each of the media player programs produce a graphical user interface having at least a list of available media items that are associated with at least one criteria, and
wherein any of the available media items in the displayed list of media items can be previewed on request by a graphical user interface action.

15 30. A network-based media purchase system as recited in claim 29, wherein each item in the displayed list of media items has a buy button, and wherein selection of the buy button causes the selected media item to purchased with no other required user interaction other than possibly a single user interface action to acknowledge a
20 purchase confirmation message.

31. A network-based media purchase system as recited in claim 29, wherein any of the available media items in the displayed list of media items can be previewed without having an account with said media commerce server.

25 32. A network-based media purchase system as recited in claim 23, wherein the second window displays a list of available media items that are available for purchase and are associated with at least one criteria.

33. A network-based media purchase system as recited in claim 32, wherein the at least one criteria can be provided via the graphical user interface through browsing, sorting or searching the media items that are available for purchase.

5 34. A network-based media purchase system as recited in claim 32, wherein selection of one of the items in the displayed list of media items causes the graphical user interface to display an image associated with the selected media item.

10 35. A network-based media purchase system as recited in claim 34, wherein the selected media item is a song, and the image associated therewith is an album cover image for an album including the song.

15 36. A network-based media purchase system as recited in claim 34, wherein any of the available media items in the displayed list of media items can be previewed on request by a graphical user interface action.

37. A network-based media purchase system as recited in claim 36, wherein any of the available media items in the displayed list of media items can be previewed without having an account with said media commerce server.

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38. A network-based media purchase system as recited in claim 19, wherein after the media items have been re-encrypted and stored to the client machines, the media items can be decrypted and presented at the client machines.

25 39. A network-based media purchase system as recited in claim 38, wherein the media items are presented at the client machines by playing the media items.

40. A network-based media purchase system as recited in claim 39, wherein the media items are audio and/or video files.

41. A network-based media purchase system as recited in claim 38, wherein the media items can only be presented at the client machines that are authorized to present the particular media items.

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42. A network-based media purchase system as recited in claim 19, wherein the client machines can operatively connect to said media commerce server and said media storage server via a network.

10 43. A network-based media purchase system as recited in claim 42, wherein the network includes at least a portion of the Internet.

44. A network-based media purchase system as recited in claim 19, wherein the client machines can operatively connect to said media commerce server and said media storage server via a network, and wherein the client media player programs communicate with said media storage server and said media commerce server via the network.

15 45. A network-based media purchase system as recited in claim 19, wherein said network-based media purchase system enables users of the client media player programs to establish accounts with said media commerce server so that media items can be purchased.

20 46. A network-based media purchase system as recited in claim 45, wherein said media commerce server maintains a purchase history for each of the users of the client media player programs that have established accounts with said media commerce server.

47. A network-based media purchase system, said system comprising:

a plurality of client media player programs, each of said client media player programs being resident on a different client machine;

a media storage server that stores media items in an encrypted format; and

5 a media commerce server that enables each of said client media player programs to purchase media items by enabling one of said client media player programs to specify at least one media item to purchase and to initiate payment for the purchase, encrypting the at least one media item particular for a user account or user associated with the one of said client media player programs, and downloading and storing the at least one media item that has been encrypted to the client
10 machine operating the one of said client media player programs.

48. A network-based media purchase system as recited in claim 47, wherein the media items can only be presented at the client machines that are authorized to present the particular media items.

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49. A network-based media purchase system as recited in claim 47, wherein said network-based media purchase system enables users of the client media player programs to establish accounts with said media commerce server so that media items can be purchased.

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50. A network-based media purchase system as recited in claim 47, wherein said media commerce server permits subsequent downloading of the media items that have been purchased until the corresponding client player program confirms receipt of the media items that have been purchased.

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51. A network-based media purchase system as recited in claim 47, wherein said media commerce server enables each of said client media player programs to purchase the media items at a fixed price per media item.

52. A network-based media purchase system as recited in claim 47, wherein the media items are audio songs.

53. A network-based media purchase system as recited in claim 47, wherein the media items are groups of audio songs.

54. A network-based media purchase system as recited in claim 47, wherein the media items are one or more of audio songs, videos, audiobooks.

55. A method for processing an electronic payment for an online purchase, said method comprising:

receiving purchase information for an online purchase made by a user;

deferring processing of electronic payment for the online purchase;

accumulating the purchase information for the online purchase together with one or more other online purchases of the user being deferred;

determining whether a deferral limit for the online purchases of the user being deferred has been reached; and

initiating an aggregate electronic payment transaction for the online purchases being deferred after said determining determines that the deferral limit has been reached.

56. A method as recited in claim 55, wherein the deferral limit is based on at least one deferral criteria.

57. A method as recited in claim 56, wherein the deferral criteria includes at least one of a number of online purchases, a time duration, or an amount of the online purchases being deferred.

58. A method as recited in claim 55, wherein the deferral limit is reached once the aggregated cost of the online purchases being deferred exceeds a threshold cost amount, or once a deferral time threshold is exceeded.

5 59. A method as recited in claim 55, wherein the user has a user account, and wherein the user pertains to any authorized user of the user account.

60. A method as recited in claim 59, wherein the deferral limit is dependent on the user or user account.

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61. A computer readable medium including at least computer program code for processing an electronic payment for an online purchase, said computer readable medium comprising:

15 computer program code for receiving purchase information for an online purchase made by a user;

computer program code for deferring processing of electronic payment for the online purchase;

20 computer program code for accumulating the purchase information for the online purchase together with one or more other online purchases of the user being deferred;

computer program code for determining whether a deferral limit for the online purchases of the user being deferred has been reached; and

25 computer program code for initiating an aggregate electronic payment transaction for the online purchases being deferred after said determining determines that the deferral limit has been reached.

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